

I.C.MARK LTD

Serving the Local Community since 1972

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

IN A TIME OF GRIEVING

WHEN ADULTS GRIEVE Everyone grieves differently. Grief is a natural response to loss in our lives. Grief is a private experience, one that takes place in the head and heart of an individual. It's like fingerprints – everyone is unique in the way they experience and express their grief and each loss is different, just like the different fingers of your hands. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Men and women often show their grief in different ways, and sometimes find it hard to understand or support each other. People of different ages and cultures have different ways of grieving as well.

How Does Grief Feel? Grief is more than just sadness. You may find yourself feeling any of these things. *Shocked or numb *Angry *Relieved *Depressed or lonely *Resentful *Guilty *Confused or forgetful *Overwhelmed *Frightened or panicky.

Most people feel grief in their bodies as well, especially in the first weeks. You may feel exhausted, cold, tense and shaky. You may find it difficult to sleep, or feel sick and have trouble eating. These things are normal, but if you are worried talk to your doctor.

How Long Does it take? Grief is more than a series of stages to go through. As time goes by, you find ways to live with your loss, other than getting over it. If this has been a big loss for you, you might find it hard for a long time, but it will not always feel as bad as it does in the first weeks and months after the death. It's normal to feel affected by your loss from time to time for the rest of your life: when you are reminded by a song, or an anniversary, or when you experience another loss in your life perhaps. Most people find there are good days and bad days at first, but gradually the loss gets easier to manage. Try to be patient with yourself and others.



How Can you Help yourself?

The days after a death are an important time to begin the process of coming to terms with what has happened. Rituals such as a funeral, tangi and memorial services are useful ways to share grief

publicly with others, to celebrate the life of the person who has died, and to comfort one another. Your funeral director can help you to make the funeral a ceremony that is special to the person who has died, and to you and your family. Everyone has something that they

can do to help themselves deal with the painful feelings of grief in those days, and in the weeks and months that follow.

Some suggestions are:

*Talking *Crying *Sharing memories *Exercise *Music *Praying *Making things *Writing *Reading.

Different things help different people. The important thing is to find what works for you and make time to do it.

WHEN CHILDREN GRIEVE

The way children express their grief may be different from adults. It can be spasmodic, so at times they seem 'back to their old selves', while at other times they may be extremely withdrawn or angry. Children often try to hide their grief from their immediate family to protect them from the pain of seeing them cry.



Adults need to provide clear and honest answers to children's questions. Be factual and avoid euphemisms like 'passed away' and 'sleeping', because they're meaningless. Worse still, expressions like 'taken away from us' can be frightening for a child. It is appropriate at the time of death to tell children what is going to happen next. Talk about the funeral arrangements, and let them know people are likely to call and some will be upset, even crying.

Explain this is normal. Tears are one way of expressing grief and it's okay to cry. Keep them involved. They may want to see the body, and this is normal – children should be given the choice. It may help some children to write a note to place in the casket, or leave a flower or card.

Talk to children at their level, in words they understand. For example, 'the doctors and nurses couldn't make Grandad's body work anymore so he died'. Perhaps some reassurance such as 'being dead doesn't hurt'. Let them come to the funeral – virtually all children who can understand what is happening are able to cope with a funeral and benefit from it. Children need an outlet for their emotions just as adults do. Get help with the difficult questions.

If children need answers to important questions that you cannot provide, professional advice from a grief counsellor will help your child to cope. It is important they understand what is happening, and that they don't try to suppress their grief.

There are some good resources available from www.skylight.org.nz

 0800 ICMARK ~ (06) 368-8108

545 - 547 Queen Street East, Levin
The Avenue Crematorium, Avenue North Road, Levin

www.icmark.co.nz